

## My So-Called Life

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Summary: Tifa invites you to take a trip down memory lane when she reflects on her friendship with Cloud. Perhaps she's ready for a new beginning?

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Hi, my name is Tifa Lockhart and I'm here because I need someone to talk to. Or maybe you can just listenâ€¦ I dunno. I'm here anyway, and I have chosen you as my trusted friend. I don't know if that's anything to be proud of, or if it even matters to you. Maybeâ€¦ maybe I felt you could understand what it's like to be me. I've had a good life, really. I used to have lots of friends, but most importantly, I had a best friend. Have you ever had a best friend? The you know what I'm talking about. It's like you can read each others minds and sometimes just a glimpse of them can make you feel much better. Safer in a way. If you look at me, there's no way you can tell I was a tomboy when I was younger. But I was. I was such a tomboy that being with girls bored me, so of course my best friend was a boy. His name was Cloud. I used to be so jealous of that name. I love clouds you see. It doesn't matter where you are in the world, there will always be clouds and clouds give me a sense of freedom. A while ago, when I was going through a tough period, I used to think: 'it doesn't matter what happens to me, there will always be clouds on the sky and as long there are clouds, I will survive'. It must have worked. I'm still here, aren't I?

I truly believe that your childhood is the happiest time of your life. You don't care what others think of you, you're free to do whatever you want, but the best thing is; you have your whole life in front of you. A endless road of opportunities. And you know you're going to end up with someone one day, but you have no idea who. Every little step you take just brings you closer to your destiny which

hopefully will turn out good. The child in me still refuses to believe that my destiny is complete, but the adult in meâ€¦ She isn't sure. I always used to believe in happy endings. As a matter of fact, I believe there is nothing but happy endings. If you die, you just weren't right for this world and can move on to the next. But back to my best friend. You have probably heard of him. The great warrior Cloud Strife who saved the world from the evil Sephiroth. That's him alright. But I'm moving too fast, this is just the end of my story. I should start at the beginning and my story begins in a little mountain town called Nibelheim. I was around 5 I think, when I first saw him. A little blond boy desperately trying to hang out with me and my friends. He was the new kid, we didn't bother with him, why should we? But finally we gave in and we took a trip up to the mountain. A lot of stuff happened, and after thatâ€¦ Well, after that he turned out to be pretty ok. We became friends. You know how it is with kids, one best friend one day, another the next. But Cloud and Iâ€¦ we clicked. As we grew older, we began to think about our future and it's safe to say we had different dreams! Cloud wanted to become famous. A great warrior like his idol Sephiroth. Fate can be pretty ironic at times, don't you say when you think of how it turned out? Anyhow, I wanted to see the world, experience things and then maybe go back to Nibelheim for good, have a couple of kids and live happily ever after. He never laughed at my dreams though. He said he understood them, but I'm not so sure. As the world went into chaos and everything started to fall apart, all he could think of was that maybe this was his chance to become the hero. He never really talked to me about it, he just closed himself up with his thoughts and at the end, right before he left, our friendship wasn't the same. I missed him terribly. Although he was right in front of me, he wasn't really there. But anyone who could read him as well as I knew he was up to something. That he would disappear became more and more obvious everyday. I couldn't take it. I had never had a heartbreak in my life, and to my biggest surprise and horror I slowly realized I had feelings for Cloud. Not just as a best friend, but that I sometimes longed for him as a person. I was 16 at the time and my safe childhood world was falling apart. I became more vulnerable than I'd ever been before and I read way too much into every word that was said to me. When I think back, I can't believe I still had the few friends I had. Cloud was thereâ€¦ as always, but too caught up in his own dreams to notice the change in me, and sometimes he blew me off rudely when I became too pushy, too desperate in my search for a little sign that meant he liked me too. And desperate I was. Desperate to keep him with me, desperate to make him understand without being too obviousâ€¦ Teenage life isn't easy, is it? But finally then time I feared came. Time for the final goodbyeâ€¦ although I didn't know at the time. Every time he looked at me in a special way, every time his hand accidentally touched mineâ€¦ I was over the moon. I thought that finally, finally something was going to happenâ€¦ A person can only handle rejection so many times, and even though I was never literally rejected, because even today I'm sure that Cloud knows nothing about my crushâ€¦ I couldn't take it anymore. I had to come clean and either begin a life with Cloud or forget all about him. They say time heals all wounds, but I'm not so sure. Something scares you for life. And being in love with your best friend is one of them. But the day Cloud asked me to meet him at our secret place was the happiest day in my life. I spent all evening getting ready and when he finally arrivedâ€¦ my heart stopped beating for a second. He was mine and he was here to tell me that. I was wrong. I was so wrong Iâ€¦ I couldn't have been more wrong and my mind totally froze. He was leaving. He was going to join SOLDIER and

become a famous warrior. He wanted to let me know that I was his best friend and he would always remember me. I wanted to cry, I wanted to scream 'don't leave me, don't leave me, don't leave me', but I couldn't. I couldn't even tell him I loved him. I did make him promise though, to always help me out if I was ever in trouble. He agreed with a sad smile and he was gone. Gone with the wind, gone with the starlight, gone with my happiness.

I don't have to tell you how terrible the next weeks were for me. I didn't eat, I didn't talk to anyone. I locked myself in my bedroom playing on the piano over and over again the song we once spent so much time learning. Together. That was the way it was supposed to be. Not like this. Not with him gone, me crying silently in my room. Was there no such thing as a happy ending? The weeks turned into months and the winter came to Nibelheim. My mother was worried about me. I hadn't started my needlework classes yet and I heard she telling my father she didn't know what it was to become of me. So I started training. Training and training to become the greatest warrior in the world after Cloud. I had this fantasy about me being good enough to join SOLDIER, disguised as a man, and being sent to Cloud's group. I would reveal who I was and he would fall madly in love with me. We all know that didn't happen. After a while my feelings died a little and I could concentrate on other things. One of the blessings of being a teenager, you forget just as fast as you fall in love. I sorta became the town's protector and four years later, when I was 20, I joined Barret's group, AVALANCHE.

You can't even imagine my surprise when Cloud walked into the bar one day. Just like that, totally out of the blue, the love of my life enters the door. I hadn't bothered much with guys after Cloud left. I had a couple of boyfriends, lost my virginity, but believe me, it's not much to talk about. It was nothing, it meant nothing to me. It was like after Cloud left, I kinda closed-up. I was cheery and I always smiled, but underneath it all, I felt empty. But why bother others with my problems? It was not like I was ever gonna see Cloud again. Or so I thought! So just try and imagine my surprise. I thought I was gonna cry. It felt so much like the old days, but still everything had changed, and between you and me, the 21 year old Cloud looked much better than the sixteen year old boy that had left me with my broken heart. I was a bit hurt that he didn't remember the promise, but still, in a way, he had kept it. Me and my group was in trouble and here he was. Ready to help us out.

I'm not gonna go into details about our adventure which turned out to save the world, you know the deal right? Aeris came and died. I was pretty sad by her death, and I know I should have been more supportive of Cloud, but I couldn't. It was petty of me, but I just couldn't understand why he felt he could talk to her instead of me. Maybe it was our history, maybe he had found out about my crush and felt uncomfortable around me. I don't know. I just know that I thought her death would make it easier for me and Cloud and our future together. It didn't. After her death he became just more reserved. He didn't talk to anyone as far as I know. Maybe he opened up to some of the others, but I doubt that. There was that time though, where I got to go inside Cloud's mind and I saw, through his memories, our happy childhood days. I felt so close to him then, but after that we fell apart. Again. And all the pain I had felt four years came right back to me. But this time it hit me so much harder, and still I had to go on as usual. Fight, escape, risk your life, all with a broken heart. It wasn't easy and it was something I could

never manage to go through again, but I did it. I fought against Sephiroth and won, side by side, me and Cloud. Just like in my dream. But it wasn't a dream, and I couldn't wake up, clinging on to the last piece of hope that I had left. My love didn't want me and our friendshipâ€¦ I dunno. I guess it got lost in the battle. Have you ever lost a best friend? Then you know what I'm talking about. The emptiness, the anger. Mostly at yourself, for letting yourself get too close to a person, but above allâ€¦ The sadness. The sadness over being left behind, like a used toy. I don't know who I am going to end up with. I don't even know if there is a person for me out there, but I do know this; I still believe in happy endings. And if you ever doubt that, just look up at the sky and remember as long as there are clouds, there is hope.

The End (For us, but not for Tifa. Her destiny has just began)

A/N: That's it for my first Final Fantasy 7 fic. I love happy endings as well, and you might have noticed, I have a thing for ending my fics with the word 'hope'. This fic is pretty self inspired and a lot of the sentences here, like the cloud thing, is stuff that has gotten me through some tough times. And cloud is actually one of my favorite words. As if you cared. Just one little thing before you write in your review 'you got that and that wrong'. It's been a long time since I played FF7 and I might have gotten some little details wrong, like was it Cloud who asked Tifa to meet him the night before he left or visa versa?

End  
file.